



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Yuma Area Office
7301 Calle Agua Salada
Yuma, Arizona 85364

IN REPLY REFER TO:

YAO-7100
LND-6.00

APR 11 2006

Subject: Draft Coachella Canal Area Resource Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (RMP/EA), Boulder Canyon Project Act - Riverside County, CA (Action by June 2, 2006)

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is the Draft RMP/EA for your review and comment. The RMP/EA describes the 10-year plan for managing the environmental resources for the Coachella Canal Area lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). The RMP/EA is an integrated document containing the information required for a Resource Management Plan and information to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The RMP/EA does not cover the care, operation, or maintenance of the Coachella Canal or its protective works and water delivery facilities. These activities are managed by the Coachella Valley Water District and will not be subject to modification by the RMP.

The RMP/EA was prepared using public input from scoping meetings, public information meetings, and the public review of draft alternatives. Reclamation originally formulated a No Action Alternative and three action alternatives that described a change in management strategy. These alternatives were presented to the public for review and comment in May 2005. After considering public comments and internal review by Reclamation, Alternative D was modified and selected as the preferred alternative. The modified Alternative D, Natural Resources Conservation/Protection with Limited Development, is the preferred alternative, described in chapter 6 of the RMP/EA.

The RMP portion of the document includes an inventory of the resources within the Coachella Canal Area and the processes Reclamation will use to implement the plan in the next 10 years.

The actions are designed to develop the land and recreation resources to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for the public while, at the same time, to protect the environment.

The EA portion of the document analyzes the environmental effects of all the action alternatives compared to the No Action Alternative. Since the alternatives developed for the RMP portion of the document are general in nature, the NEPA portion of the document (the EA) is programmatic in nature. Site-specific NEPA compliance will be required before any ground-disturbing management actions of the RMP can be implemented.

As shown on the enclosed flyer, Reclamation's Yuma Area Office will host open houses in the Coachella Valley on May 16, 17, and 18, 2006, to provide information, seek public comments, and answer your questions about the Draft RMP/EA. Each session will begin with a one-hour open house where exhibits can be viewed and discussed with Reclamation staff. Each open house will be followed by a formal presentation about the preferred management actions in the Draft RMP/EA.

The open house facilities are physically accessible. Persons who need accessibility accommodations, including sign language interpreters or other auxiliary aids, may contact Ms. Peggy Haren at 928-343-8547. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for accommodation. A Spanish speaking person will be available at each open house for translation purposes, if necessary.

We encourage your comments on the Draft RMP/EA. You may submit written comments at an open house or provide them on the enclosed comment sheet and mail it in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope. Or you may mail them to Coachella Canal Area RMP, D-8580, Bureau of Reclamation, P.O. Box 25007, Denver, Colorado 80225-0007; or fax them to Coachella Canal Area RMP, Bureau of Reclamation at 720-544-0603; or e-mail them to ccrmp@do.usbr.gov. You may also send your comments electronically by filling out and submitting the Coachella Canal Area RMP/EA comment sheet located on Reclamation's Yuma Area Office Web site at <www.usbr.gov/lc/yuma>. **All comments are due no later than June 2, 2006.**

Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from public disclosure, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There may also be circumstances in which we would withhold a respondent's identity from public

disclosure, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public disclosure in their entirety.

The Draft RMP/EA and additional information about the Coachella Canal Area RMP/EA are available for viewing on the Internet at <<http://www.usbr.gov/lc/yuma/>>.

If you have questions or need additional information about the RMP/EA or the scheduled open houses, contact Ms. Peggy Haren, Study Manager, at 928-343-8547 or Mr. Darrell Welch, Team Leader, at 303-445-2711.

Thank you for your participation in this planning process and concern for the future resource management of the study area.

Sincerely,



Jim Cherry
Area Manager

Enclosures - 4

Draft RMP/EA
Open House Flyer
Comment Sheet
Postage-paid envelope